

SATURDAY, JAN. 11, 1873.

Subject: Unconscious Influence.

# PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

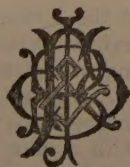
A Weekly Publication

OF

## SERMONS

PREACHED BY

### HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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## UNCONSCIOUS INFLUENCE.

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"Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least, the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one."—Acts v. 15, 16.

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I do not pretend to go into any analysis or explanation of this miraculous power which belonged certainly to the apostolic age. I do not, either, pretend to say whether it has analogies in our own time, nor whether it belongs to a part of the scheme of nature, and is an obscure, undeveloped power, which certain persons have yet, or may have, and from which, perhaps, by and by, in another age, may be brought forth marvels which shall be equivalent to the early ones. These are speculations out of which we are at present unqualified, or out of which I, at any rate, am unqualified, to bring any practical result.

I perceive that in the apostles' day there was this power, and that certain fruits flowed from the exercise of it. I perceive that while at first voluntary and exerted by the apostles with conscious will and purpose; it was in many instances also involuntary, as it were, overflowing, acting without the consciousness or the volition.

You will recollect that not a dissimilar instance occurred in the life of our Saviour, when he was going to perform a miracle in the house of Jairus. He was touched by a woman in a great throng, and she was instantly healed. Although he had, as we have reason to believe, no consciousness of her act until it was performed, he instantly felt that virtue had gone out of him. The apostles are represented—Peter especially—as being so filled with this curative power that when they brought to him great multitudes, thronging the streets, they were healed. They were placed so that his very shadow should fall on them; and that seemed to have the healing power.

In Paul's case, we find in another place that they brought handkerchiefs and articles of dress, that he might through them give forth healing virtue.

I have selected this passage, not so much to speak directly of the historic fact, as from it to derive instruction concerning what I may call *unconscious influence or power*. Here was the apostle who had gone forth purposed to heal men; and one by one as they were brought up he commanded them to stand; and they stood whole. Thus he exerted a conscious and voluntary power. But as he passed along the streets, his shadow fell upon many, and they sprang up behind him, he knowing little or nothing of it; so that his shadow or unconscious influence, also, was working at the same time.

Now, all of us have both kinds of influence, or power—that which we understand and mean, and that which falls like a shadow, the existence of which we do not understand nor recognize.

Men are surcharged with power. They are not recipients alone. They are susceptible of influence. Men give forth power one upon another; and human life is an endless scene of giving and receiving—of interchanging cerebral influence, in thoughts and feelings and actions which are but the interpretations thereof.

Both these kinds of influence are at work on every hand, and all the time. In the vast mixture of human affairs there are these intersphering powers—the direct, intentional exercise of force, and the indirect and unintentional exercise of force. Human life in its mighty conglomeration is made up—in what proportions we can scarcely tell—of these two great influences.

The importance of voluntary activity in human affairs, I need not indicate to you. You are not likely, in this stirring land, and in this enterprising age, when men are stimulated so that overstimulation is the very vice of the times, to fall into the evil of want of activity. It is the root and spring of all commercial business. It is the foundation of all real development in education. It is that secret marrow and element from which the wise and just administration of government proceeds. It is the spring from which comes all wholesome enterprise. It is that which stirs up men, and prevents stagnation, and the vices which it breeds. It is the inspiration of art. It is that which inspires and developes men. It is intended voluntary activity, in thought and feeling, carried out into practical life, that is the secret of the movement of the ages. And men are far more in danger of over-estimating than of under-estimating it. In oriental lands, where a kind of passivity exists, and a sort of fatalism broods, men need to be taught

the profit of enterprise; they need to be stirred up; but in our more western lands, we need far more to have the other side presented to us—we need to be taught that all intentional voluntary activity carries with it an unintentional and involuntary activity, into the nature of which we do well to inquire. Men who are energizers are apt to forget all except that which they mean.

Men may, in the first place, act unconsciously in the production of trouble, far more than they themselves suspect, or will admit; for their unconscious influence works according to the quality of that which is in them. When men pursue voluntary courses, they often hide the reality, and put forth that which is not real but simulated. Thus, perhaps, one makes himself friendly to a person whom he does not like, for purposes of business. Sometimes men suppress anger because good-nature will carry their purposes better. So that a man's overt and open conduct may not be in the line of nature, and may not be in the line of force.

But there is an influence derived from the reality that is in you—from that which you actually are. It does not depend at all upon your hiding or showing, but it has its own methods of acting, and of making itself felt upon the consciousness of men. From the nature of your character you may act in a malign sphere without intending it—without, at any rate, intending that others shall know it.

For example, a man, being of a very proud nature, and intending well enough, may carry himself in such a way that every one he meets is made to feel his inferiority; so that every man he meets is conscious of having a certain arrogancy thrown upon him. A man may carry himself in such a way, he may so speak or look or act, that without the slightest intention of doing so, he shall insult his fellow-men, and make a perpetual aggression upon them. In this way a man may do harm intending it. Your pride does not always exert itself according to your will. It has a magnetism of its own.

A man may carry in his hand, if he please, a mignonette, and he may carry it because it is sweet. He may also put fetid odors in his clothes. He may hide them, not wishing that others shall know that they are there. But they will make themselves known, whether he wants them to or not.

So a man may carry himself in the strong qualities of his nature, wishing well; but if those qualities are harmful in their tendency he will produce mischief in spite of his good intentions. His dominant faculties have a way of their own, quite independent of his will.

A man's selfishness may act as good conductors of heat do. If you go into your yard, and put your hand upon a post of wood, it seems relatively warm; and if you put it on an iron fence, it seems excessively cold. They are of the same temperature, as measured by the thermometer, only the iron, being a good conductor, has the power of drawing heat rapidly from your hand, while the wood, being a poor conductor, draws it but sparingly. One seems warmer than the other, owing to this difference in the power of the two materials to conduct heat from your hand.

So it is with men. Some men exhaust you, they suck you dry, and you know not what is the matter. Others inspirit you, lift you up, and help you. A man may have a nature such that when you are in his presence you are perpetually conscious that your sympathy is drawn upon and exhausted. He is a good conductor. His effect upon you is to chill you. And he does not intend any harm. He sits in the midst of the company supremely selfish. Unconscious selfishness always works in that way. Every man around about him is more or less fleeced and robbed by his unconscious disposition. And this disposition cannot be hid. A man may be consciously selfish and not half so offensive as a man whose selfishness is never positively aggressive, but who carries an inward nature that all the while and everywhere draws upon men, making the whole room and house uncomfortable; never showing itself in any one thing, but pervading the atmosphere, and keeping everybody restricted and chilled, keeping everybody conscious of unhappiness, and yet ignorant of the reason why. Some men are like a sponge, in their influence upon their fellow-men in life. They have qualities which suck up all that can be drawn from those around about them. Porous beings of selfishness they are; and when we go into their presence we sit shivering.

So, combativeness may take on forms which will detract from the happiness of every one. The more obvious forms in which combativeness acts—namely those of violent outbreaking—bad as they are, probably, if measured by the mischief which they work, would not be found to produce one half the discomfort of society which arises from the latent forms of combativeness—what we call ill-nature; a low-toned irritable impatience—it hovers in the air. It is in silence as much as in the short, sharp reply. It stirs every body up, and keeps every body uneasy. Sourness, moroseness, peevishness—these carry a chill all around about them.

There come to us moist, clammy days, with the east wind, from the sea, which seem to suck more heat from us than cold days when the thermometer is below zero. And so people—not bad

people, but people who are under the dominant influence of combativeness in all its shapes—produce great disquiet and discomfort wherever they go. If you ask them, “Do you mean to make men unhappy?” They disclaim it at once; and if you charge them with having made men unhappy, they deny it, instantly, and say, “I never lifted a finger; I did not do a thing; I am not responsible for what I do not intend.” Yes, you are. A man is responsible for his unconscious as well as his conscious influence. He is responsible for the temperament which he carries about with him in the affairs of life, so far as it may be a matter of restraint and development.

So men oftentimes fill the circles in which they live with malign influences. They poison the air with suspicion, with envy, with jealousy.

And it is not necessary that such a one should point out a single person to be laid open to suspicion. It is not necessary to point out the traits of this or that person to the advantage or disadvantage of other people. A look, a hint, a shrug, may convey the wretched insinuation; or the unconscious atmosphere of jealousy make itself felt. A nature that is inclined to do these things more dangerously affects us than almost any other, because it unsettles our faith, and our charity, and our radiant good-will. And little by little, it brings men down to its own terms and conditions. So that one person, living in a house with a suspicious, envious and jealous disposition, is oftentimes enough to sour the dispositions of a whole family.

I may mention, also, the unconscious wrong which sorrow commits upon those who are about it. Sorrow is not a thing to be controlled altogether. Certainly, it is not a thing to be rudely criticised. There are times when sorrow must have its own way, even though it cast its dark shadow over bright faces. All this may be true, and yet we must exhort men to beware of the extremely selfish tendencies and qualities of sorrow.

You have a right, as far as you can, to lean on sympathizing friends, and so relieve your sorrow; and men should help the sorrowful; but, after all, no one has a right to eke out his sorrow. No one has a right to distribute, to spread, his sorrow; to cover the young with gloom, to carry twilight into the household; to use his sorrows in such a way that others shall be depressed under the influence of them.

This is true, too, in the matter of ill-health. Invalids are privileged persons; but they should not privilege themselves. Because one is sick, he has no right to set aside all laws of love, and

disinterestedness, and honor. There are no times in the world when persons ought to be so thoughtful and self-vigilant as in times of minor sickness. What may be called major sickness is that which transports us beyond the bounds of self-control. All those forms of illness, then, which are within the realm of self-control, should be subject to Christian conscience and the law of benevolence. Parents, masters, men of strength and power, teachers, employers, may have such an exacting disposition that everybody around them is kept on nettles. It is one thing to hold persons to a regular system. It is another thing to be perpetually criticising. When you have laid down reasonable rules, you have a right to draw men to those rules, and keep them harnessed in them; and that usually can be done without any mischief or harm to the temper; but an exacting disposition—one that is minutely spying and questioning, and holding up men to sharply exacting obedience here and there—that quality, which I fear I do not need to define any further, which most of you see somewhere, and, I am afraid, practise sometimes—such a disposition is the cause of much discomfort and unhappiness. It puts on the form of criticism; and men say, at every step, “I am right, and they are wrong;” but it violates the great law of love, and diffuses discord, and is oftentimes the source of more frets and envenomed feelings than almost anything else.

Men’s good qualities, even, may act unfavorably upon other men.

*Let not your good be evil spoken of*, may be applied to dispositions. For example, a man may be a perfectly upright and conscientious man, and yet carry his conscience in such a way that it is perpetually condemning men, holding up before them a standard which they cannot aspire to, and so taking away from them all quiet and sense of happiness.

There is also a kind of arrogance of goodness. There are persons who, by temperament, by early education, or by circumstances, or by all of these together, through divine grace, are lifted above the common infirmities of men; and if they hold this in a sweet unconsciousness, and are humble, it is a source of great happiness all the time, to others as well as to themselves; but deliver me from a person who never does wrong—and *knows* it! Deliver me from one whose tongue never makes any mistakes—and keeps account of that fact all the time! If there be anything that is provoking to a poor sinner—and most of us are poor sinners—it is one of these perfect people who move about without much temptation and without much oscillation, a perpetual rebuke to us all the time—a kind of stinging censure to our infelicities and inferiorities!

I do not believe in swearing ; and yet I understand exactly what Theodore Parker meant, when he said that he never liked Washington till he heard that he swore. It broke the charm of that stateliness which Washington had, and let in the light of human infirmity. There are many people who carry themselves with such a kind of wax-like and artificial perfectness, that a sin would very much redeem them, apparently. In other words, it would take away that kind of hard, cold, self-righteous aspect which they carry about with them, and would bring them nearer to the level, and so nearer to the sympathy, of common humanity.

Turn to the other side—that of unconscious influence in a good sphere. If the predominant faculties are sweet and gracious, then you will carry with you, all the time, a sweet and gracious atmosphere, so that while you are doing good on purpose, you will be doing more good without purpose.

When the sun travels over the continent, ere long it will certainly ripen all the orchards which men have planted on purpose ; but it will ripen, too, all the nuts and fruits on the countless acres that men know nothing of. The summer's sun will take care of the farmer's corn and wheat ; and so it will take care of the infinite variety of seeds which nestle in the grass and on the ground all over the uninhabited territory of the continent. The summer's sun will work with the worker ; and it will also work where no man is. It is the patron of the city, of the village, of the country, of the wilderness, east, west, north and south, in the valley, and up and down the mountain-side. Everywhere the sun is bringing forth abundant fruit. The summer is ripening all things that are for man, and beast, and bird, and worm, and insect.

So men go forth. They are almoners of God's bounty in the things which they mean ; and if they be large, and rich, and ripe, they are also almoners of the bounty which they do not mean, and of which they are not conscious. They shed abroad their influence on every side of them, and enrich all that are near them.

One who has trained himself to a steady and ample benevolence, to kindliness of disposition, over and above specific actions ; one who has ripened himself so that he is serene, and sweet, and well-wishing, and admirable in all the elements of his being—such a man carries with him perpetual benefaction. There be men whom we might almost wish to have walk up and down in the street, in order to shed abroad their disposition—unconscious to themselves, perhaps. There be those who are beautiful, throwing themselves into the attitude of grace and beauty, and who are conscious of it ; and yet

there is a beauty which does not know that it is beautiful—and that is, perhaps, the more beautiful. So there is goodness that means to be good; and there is a great deal of goodness, which is better yet, that comes out from the eye, from the lips, or from the pores—I had almost said, from the skin—and that is not conscious of being good. And when one dwells in such a royal bounty of kindness and goodness in himself that his very shadow, falling on men, makes them happy, that unconscious kindness and goodness is wealth indeed.

I may mention how much contribution men make in life of things which cost them but little, or need cost them but little. There are a great many men who bless society, and are recognized as blessing society; but there are a great many humble workers in society who bless it, and are not recognized.

When the train is stopped, you shall see the engineer spring off from the locomotive, and, with his long-necked can, oil the machinery at every point, so that the oil shall run in at all the joints. We look at him and at the engine, and admire them. But we never say a word to the oil, or about it. And yet, the engine, and what it does by its strength, are largely dependent upon the lubrication which the oil brings.

Now, there are lubricators among men, who keep the machinery of society oiled, so as to prevent its joints from wearing, and its journals from heating. He is a lubricator who introduces great improvements in the processes of society; but there are men who prevent the friction which would otherwise be produced by its working. Such a man I consider one who is thoroughly good-natured. A man who carries a disposition that is characterized by thorough good-nature, tends to make others good-natured. Other people take from us what we carry to them; and if you go in an irritable mood to your breakfast, you will probably find another person who is irritable over against you; and the irritability will be there because you carried it. If you are cold, those around you will shiver. If you are good-natured, men will be apt to know it, and to respond to your good-nature. Men are as much perceived that carry good-nature in society, as spice-wood is that carries sweet odors. God bless good-natured men, and multiply the number of them! There is no danger of there being too many men who are not easily irritated, who look on the bright side of things, and who tend to solace—men that you can cushion on, and not touch the hard angles of an exacting, conscientious spirit—men who, in ship, or house, or store, or shop, are so sweet that they suggest the more genial, the kindlier aspects of human life.

I would not have all the world good-natured. I would not have good-nature to be the only and supreme grace; and there is no danger of its being so—not the least. But where there are so many other sterling qualities, we need lubrication. And blessed are they that move around about in society so as to lubricate it. There are many such who are not conscious of it.

A man goes home from his business at night, and sits down by the fire, and, summing up the transactions of the day, says to himself: "Well, I am afraid I have not done anything to-day. I failed in seeing men that I meant to see. It does not seem to me that I have accomplished much." Oh, yes, he has. The very moment he went into his store in the morning he met John, and said a kind word to him. He asked after his family. John was down in the mouth. His child was sick, and he was afraid it was going to die; but when the man came in with such a genial, gleeful spirit, and spoke to him so pleasantly, John felt better; he felt better all day; and he went home at night feeling that the child was not going to die after all. One of the clerks is in great perplexity; something has gone wrong in his accounts. He is afraid that the case is so bad that it cannot be arranged. But the man says he guesses it will come out all right, and takes hold, and straightens the matter, and the clerk is at ease again, and says, "What a comfort it is to have a man that is kind about you!" He also noticed the poor apple woman on the corner, and spoke a good word to her, and put her in a comfortable state of mind. And on the boat he spoke to one and another and another, and had some kind and genial word for each. And so he went on through the day, shedding his influence on whomever he met in his round of varied duties. It is a great comfort just to look at a man who is good-natured.

I remember once riding from Franklin, in Indiana, on a cold night. I was chilled. I was so cold that I almost feared that I should freeze. After a while, I came across a blacksmith's shop. I saw a bright, shining light on the forge. Logs were burning and smouldering there, and sending up their red flame. I was so cold that, to tell you the truth, I cried. I wanted to get off and warm myself, but I was afraid that I should be so numb that I could not get on again. So I sat and looked at the fire a moment; and then I said: "Well, I feel better just for looking at you," and rode on. I did not freeze to death—you may be interested to know!

I have seen persons whose very presence, when the night was dark, and the way was difficult, and all things were freezing cold, filled you with comfort and hope. There are thousands and thou-

sands of times when men want to be thawed out. Men have power enough, but it is frozen. Men have energy enough, but they need sympathy. Men have good stuff in them, but they want something to inspire them. Men need that which shall be to them what a hone is to a knife. And there are men who are supplying this element to those who lack it, without knowing what they are doing. Many men are, I suppose, redeemed from death by a word. Many men are shot along the way of encouragement, and made to triumph, by some man who never dreams that he is doing anything for them.

It is a good investment to have good-nature, and so much of it that you exhale it, as flowers do their odors; for you do not know who will take the comfort of it, though there may be hundreds and thousands that you never heard of who will be recipients of the blessed influence of your disposition. Some of you, however, I am afraid will never have the joy of knowing that you have done anything of the kind.

So, too, there is great inspiration and comfort in hope, and in courage, and in humor, and in wit. Because wit and humor have led men into frivolous pleasures, it has been the fashion with some persons to discredit them. But I think that among the gifts which have been made to humanity, none, in the lower sphere of virtues, should call forth our thankfulness more than the gifts of cheerfulness, and wit, and humor. They civilize life. They carry with them a perpetual blessing. If any man have buoyancy, if he find himself given to wit, in the name of Heaven do not suppress it. Multiply the drops which spring out of that precious fountain. There is life in it.

How painful it is to see persons who take everything on the point of hard reality. I see a great many housekeepers who take everything on the side of care. Every day there are things in their experience that strike on hard, sharp points. They do not know how to meet life. They take everything with pain and difficulty. And what a blessing it is that some things seem funny to men! What a blessing it is, too, that there is a comical side to things! for mirth almost invariably works with benevolence. Humor and mirth work with the moral sentiments, and not with the malign feelings. They tend toward the spiritual and the divine.

Some men do not suppose there is mirth in heaven. I do; and I do not know how men read the Old Testament, or the New, either, if they do not find mirth, and the utmost upspring of joy, to be taught there as the inspiration of religion. And where did these come from? Who made them? What is the foundation

of them? Where is that great fountain from whence all those elements have sprung which now make human life what it is?

Blessed are they who naturally are inspirers of hope and courage; who lend themselves thus to the weak, and defend the defenceless; and who do it without complaining, unconsciously and abundantly, every day. There are great treasures laid up for some men. If thanks are music, there are some men who, when by and by they go to heaven, will be greeted by choral strains for the good they have done, for the hope they have re-illuminated, and for the good-nature they have inspired, of which they were not conscious while they were upon earth.

Still more are trust, devotion, humility, where they exist in such a degree that they exert themselves unconsciously upon men, the best inspiration of faith, and the best teaching of religion. I suppose we think more of what Christ was than of what he said or did. That is to say, his actions and teachings seem rather to have been digested and incorporated into our thought of his character, and we look back upon him, not so much as a talker and actor, as a perfect person. He always seems to me as one with a shining face. He always seems to me as genial, and gentle, and loving, and winning. None go near him without feeling the sanctity of his presence. None go near him without feeling inspired toward good.

And so while we do and teach, our best work is that which we perform without knowing it. Silence under provocation is better than doctrine, to many and many a man. Fortitude under trouble is a testimony to religion which is far better than a thousand proof-texts. Devotion, humility, love, and trust in God when all things seem failing—these are powers indeed; and they who have these supreme qualities of religion scarcely need to teach doctrine, since they are themselves realizations and fruits of the highest doctrine, and of the noblest endeavors.

Once more. As men are unconscious of how much harm they do, and of how much unhappiness they unwittingly cause, so they may do a great deal more good than they think; they may do a great deal, intending it; but no man ever works boldly and strongly and whole-heartedly, but what, I think, he does more without knowing it than he does knowing it.

It is not what you say to your class, teacher, that measures the influence that you are exerting upon them. If you be faithful, if your heart is in your work, it is not that of which you can make statistics in the social circle that measures your influence there. Far more influence comes with activity than is shown by the immediate fruit of that activity. The shadow of Peter worked just as

much as Peter's body itself worked; and genuine men and women work both by substance and by shadow—by purpose and by unconscious influence. There be many who mourn the want of opportunity, and yet endeavor to conform to the disposition of their Master, and to carry themselves through life wisely and well, who will wake up by and by, when they stand in the presence of the all-revealing Eye, with sweet surprise and adoring gratitude, to see how much more, after all, their life meant than they themselves thought.

In your boyhood, as you will very well remember, you used to write with invisible ink; and there was nothing for the recipient to do but to take the paper and hold it to the fire, and straightway out came the message.

There is much writing with invisible ink in this world. There is a great deal of trumpeting activity. There is also a great deal of activity which does not report itself to the senses, but which is powerfully influential—namely, a godly life; patient continuance in well-doing; attainment in humility, fidelity, truth; standing faithful to the end in the place where God has put you.

You cannot tell what you are doing. No man can tell it to you. You are writing with invisible letters on thousands of children's hearts; on the hearts of passers-by; on the hearts of friends and neighbors; on the hearts of those whom you meet in every circle where you move. There are a thousand influences radiating from you in your life-time which will bring forth their seeds abundantly in the kingdom of God's glory.

May we, then, have such substantial qualities of Christian manliness, may we have such large-heartedness in good, may we so restrain pride and selfishness, and all malign and ill-omened passions, and so give prevalence to the sweetness of love and the bounty of benevolence, and to all that is hopeful and courageous, that our whole life shall be a benefaction to those who never recognize it here, but who will recognize it by and by, when they are our companions in the kingdom of God's glory.

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

WE draw near to thee, not as to one that needs to be instructed, our Father, in our want. Before we knew ourselves, thou didst know us; and our wants are discerned afar off. And thou hast commanded all thy messengers—the sun in his time, and all things, and every law—to supply the needs of the living creation. And thou art giving to all an abundant supply. We rejoice to believe that thou art. Super-eminent above all thy works art thou; and though we cannot conceive nor measure thy being; though thou art more than a man, or than a man can think; though our thought cannot fly to compass thee, thou art in majesty so great, and so great in glory; though thou art larger and better, and transcendently higher than any conception which we can form, yet we feel thine influence, and are drawn toward thee. We know thee as a taper, though we cannot see thee as a sun. We know that thou art Love, though love in thee transcends any human experience. We know what power is among men; but what it must be in thy nature we cannot understand. Yet we rejoice in that which we do know. We rejoice in it as they that watch in the spring rejoice in the summer that is coming on, and whose footsteps are felt and seen, although the fruit still lingers by the way. They are glad, and so are we. Though we see thee as through a glass darkly; though we see thee through our infirmities, and misconceive of thee; though we leave out the glory, the plenitude, the grandeur of thy nature, which is far beyond our containing measure, yet we rejoice in that which is visible, in that which is potential, and in that which comes to us, and dwells within us.

Accept our thanks, O Lord our God, for what thou hast made us; for what thou hast given us; for all those gracious influences which have surrounded us from our childhood. We thank thee for our parents; for their early instruction; for that way in which we walk by reason of their influence; for home; for all the blessed associations which are connected with it; for our early companionships; for our entrance into life; for our labors therein; for the fruits which we have reaped in years gone by; for the experiences which we have had in life; for our trials; for its weariness; for its heartsickness; for its sorrow; and for its very anguish. These have all been, in thine hand, instructions; and by them we have been made wise and strong. We recognize thy power, which has borne us on, and preserved us in the midst of temptations and dangers.

Werejoice, O God, that thou hast hidden from us the future. It contents us that thou dost know it altogether. And we leave ourselves in thine hand, believing that thou canst do better for us than we can ask or think. Grant that every day we may bear within us this contented mind—this faith and trust in God. Grant that we may believe, and that our believing may take hold of the far-off and innermost heaven. There may our hope be as an anchor, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the vail. May we not trust what we can see, nor rejoice in that which appears, but place our dependence in the invisible, in thee, in thy kingdom, in all thy gracious influences, and in all thy words of promise and of hope which thou hast shaken down from thy heavens upon us. Grant, we pray thee, that thus we may rejoice in darkness and in light, in sorrow and in joy, in weakness and in strength, in sickness and in health, in prosperity and in adversity, being steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Look compassionately upon thy servants who are gathered together today. Forgive their sins. Search their hearts, and bring forth all that

which is evil in thy sight. Shine thou upon them with the light of thy countenance, that they may trust in thee, and turn from whatever is wrong, and have a consciousness of that peace which God gives to the forgiven.

Grant thy blessing to rest upon all those who have come hither weak, and conscious of their weakness, asking strength of God. Be with those who are in doubt and perplexity of mind. Open the path before their feet, that they may be able to walk therein firmly, trusting in God, and leaning upon him as upon a Saviour. May those who are in darkness find thy light and thy consolation. Be all to all. Be thou light; be thou medicine; be thou bread; be thou strength to the weak; health to the sick; comfort to the distressed; eyes to the blind; feet to the lame. Grant, we pray thee, that thine abounding mercies may be dispensed to all, so that every one shall feel that he has been called of God, and has had at his Father's table, this day, a portion of the divine bounty.

We pray that thou wilt bless those who labor in our midst—all teachers; all that are working for the outcast, the poor, and the neglected. Abundantly grant unto them the divine influence, that they may not alone bear the letter of instruction, but carry the spirit of Christ, and all the deeds of Christ with them.

We pray that thou wilt raise up friends for those who are friendless. We beseech of thee that thou wilt favor those who seek for the purification of morals; for obedience to law; for the prevalence of justice; for intelligence throughout our land; and for the spread of true religion everywhere.

O that the day may come when men shall learn the lore of love! How long shall the passions bear sway? How long shall men live by that which is lowest and least in themselves? When shall they feel the heavenly inspiration, and by thought and nobler sentiment live divinely? Let wars pass away. Let superstitions pass. Let sins pass. Bring in the latter-day glory. Grant, O Lord, that speedily every nation may know thee and thy laws, and in obedience find full fruition of joy.

And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

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### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thou wilt bless us in the word which we have spoken. Grant that all of us may take heed to its truth. May we seek to live in such a reality, may we seek to be so manly in the essential qualities of a true manhood, that whether we mean it or not, our hearts shall be perpetually filling other men's hearts with kindness, with helpfulness, with courage, and with good impulses. Give us of thine own nature. Dwell in us. We are helpless. We sprang from the earth. We aspire toward heaven. Grant that we may have a heavenly influence perpetually drawing us thither. And when thy work shall have been completed in us, and thy purpose in us shall have been wrought out, give us joyful dismissal, that we may fly away and be at rest. And to thy name shall be the praise, Father, Son, and Spirit. *Amen.*

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